

Public Workshop Notes
Town Hill Mini-Plan
September 25, 2008
Town Hill VIS

1. Staff Planner Kris Hultgren presented the interim report to meeting participants. It included an overview of the process for developing a Town Hill Mini-Plan and reviewed the issues discussed at previous meetings. These issues included transportation and pedestrian improvements, village form, water quality and quantity issues and preserving the visual character of Town Hill. Mr. Hultgren noted that much of the inventory of resources in Town Hill was covered by the presentations made by the College of the Atlantic students and through the Comprehensive Plan process. The report and presentation are available on the town's website – www.barharmaine.gov/planning.
2. The Island Explorer bus route was a topic of discussion. It was noted that the Knox Road is the only town road used by the Island Explorer and the buses can be a nuisance when traveling fast down the road and making a lot of noise. One meeting participant wondered why the Knox Road is the only town road used on the route. More access to the Island Explorer is wanted in Town Hill but every effort should be made to reduce the noise it makes.
3. The sequence of implementing the final plan was noted. Certain parts of the plan are contingent on other parts of the plan being accomplished and it's difficult to know what will get done. An increase in minimum lot size was questioned and disapproval for any increase was noted. Specifically, one meeting participant voiced disapproval for the interim report section suggesting an increase in minimum lot size to two or three acres to preserve rural character.
4. The quality of water and future development was discussed at length. Many comments focused on making sure groundwater is not contaminated from too much development. The groundwater and future development study of Hadley Point by Stratex was

mentioned as a good idea for Town Hill. Staff noted that such a plan is currently being worked on by geologist Lissa Robinson.

5. Planning Director Anne Krieg updated the group on an ongoing study of water quality issues in the Northeast Creek watershed by USGS and the town. She noted that the study intends to update research conducted previously and should provide usable data on the impact of development in the Northeast Creek watershed.

6. The group continued to discuss the impacts of development on water quality and the affects of nitrate loading from septic systems. The physical constraints of the land like thin and shallow soils was noted as an issue to watch closely as more development increases the number of septic systems in the area.

7. The issue of a septic system in Town Hill was raised. Meeting participants asked how the town would provide such a system and the likely impacts on residents. Staff noted the difficulty in determining the exact financial cost and timeframe for implementing such a system.

8. Beth Della Valle, a member of the consultant team, was introduced and gave a brief overview of the team's goals for the project. Ms. Della Valle noted her involvement with the town during the Comprehensive Plan process and reviewed the scenario building exercises being planned for later in the process.

9. The discussion continued with Ms. Della Valle about nitrate loading in the area due to development. One participant noted that technologies for disposing of waste are likely to reduce the amount of strain on the land to treat the waste and that should be considered when evaluating future growth.

10. The group discussed future growth in Town Hill. The impacts of planned unit developments and conventional subdivisions were noted. PUDs were proposed to be required in Town Hill at one stage of the Comprehensive Plan process but that provision

was removed by the Town Council. Requiring developers to construct PUDs in Town Hill was noted as something that should be looked at again during this process.

11. Preserving land around Western Bay was mentioned as important to any future plan for Town Hill. But others cautioned that it is equally as important to preserve property rights for land owners in the area.

12. Ms. Della Valle reviewed different ways to control traffic in the village area. For instance, certain design techniques like lining streets with trees can act as a traffic calming measure by alerting the motorist that the landscape is changing. She went on to say that the 75 foot setback and open land of the village area promotes speeding traffic. Another way to calm traffic is to move buildings closer to the street like the village of Somesville. She finished by reviewing the growth areas around the village center.